

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 193574

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TAGS: PFOR, UR, CI

SUBJ: SOVIETS BREAK RELATIONS WITH CHILE

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH CHILE
CAME WITH LITTLE FOREWARNING AGAINST BACKGROUND
OF CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT IN REACTING TO COUP.
SOVIET CREDIBILITY AMONG WORLD LEFTISTS PROBABLY
FIGURED HEAVILY IN DECISION, WITH MISTREATMENT OF
SOVIET NATIONALS PROVIDING BOTH THE PRETEXT AND
POSSIBLY THE AGGRAVATION THAT TIPPED THE BALANCE.
WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT MOVE WAS
PREEMPTIVE, SOVIETS HAVING CONCLUDED THEY WOULD SOON
BE FORCED OUT. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ISSUED SEPTEMBER 21
ANNOUNCED DECISION BREAK RELATIONS WITH CHILE, CITING
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NUMEROUS ACTS AGAINST SOVIET NATIONALS WHICH HAD MADE

THEIR SITUATION "INTOLERABLE." SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILE IN FIRST TEN DAYS FOLLOWING COUP HAD BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY ACTIVE CAMPAIGN OF SOLIDARITY WITH CHILEAN PEOPLE IN PRESS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS BUT WITHOUT FRONTAL ATTACK ON NEW GOVERNMENT BY SOVIET LEADERSHIP OR ACTS OF OFFICIAL DISAPPROVAL BY SOVIET GOVERNMENT. ISSUE MAY HAVE GENERATED STRONG FEELINGS AMONG ORTHODOX-THINKING SOVIET CIRCLES AND AMONG THE WORLD'S LEFTISTS. WE SURMISE THAT GAP BETWEEN PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF MAINTAINING TOEHOLD IN SANTIAGO AND DEMANDS OF IDEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES BECAME TOO GREAT FOR A LEADERSHIP ALREADY HARD PRESSED TO MAINTAIN ITS REALTY TO CLASS STRUGGLE WHILE PURSUING DETENTE.

3. SOVIET AGGRAVATION OVER MISTREATMENT OF ITS NATIONALS IN CHILE SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED AS FACTOR, ALTHOUGH MOSCOW HAS KEPT STIFF UPPER LIP UNDER WORSE PROVOCATION IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES IN OTHER PLACES (CHINESE SIEGE OF USSR EMBASSY PEKING IN CULTURAL REVOLUTION COMES TO MIND). SOVIETS HAD MAINTAINED TOTAL SILENCE ON PROBLEMS THEY WERE ENCOUNTERING IN SANTIAGO UNTIL BREAK ANNOUNCED.

4. IT ALSO POSSIBLE THAT CHILEAN EXPULSION OF CUBANS AND, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, NORTH KOREANS MAY HAVE BEEN SEEN BY SOVIETS AS HANDWRITING ON THE WALL, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF JUNTA'S ACTIONS AGAINST DOMESTIC SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS. THUS THE DIPLOMATIC BREAK MAY HAVE BEEN A PREEMPTIVE MOVE BY MOSCOW TO SALVAGE SOME PRESTIGE BEFORE BEING FORCED OUT OF CHILE. FACT THAT SOVIETS WAITED AS LONG AS THEY DID SUGGESTS THEY FIRST CALCULATED THEY COULD RIDE OUT DIFFICULT POST-COUP PERIOD, BUT CHANGED THEIR MINDS EITHER BECAUSE OF HEAT FROM IDEOLOGICALLY ORTHODOX CIRCLES OR BECAUSE THEY HAD INDICATION THAT JUNTA WAS FAR MORE INHOSPITABLE THAN THEY HOPED.

5. IT IS INTERESTING TO SPECULATE ON PROCESS BY WHICH SOVIET ARRIVED AT DECISION. POLITBURO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NORMALLY MEETS ON THURSDAYS, AND CHILE WAS SURE TO HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IF THERE WAS A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 20. BREZHNEV HAD SPOKEN AUTHORITATIVELY ON THE SUBJECT IN SOFIA ON SEPTEMBER 19, TAKING A RESTRAINED POSITION. POLITBURO DISCUSSION IN HIS ABSENCE MAY HAVE LED TO CONSENSUS THAT TOUGHER POSTURE REQUIRED. ALTHOUGH DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS SURELY NEEDED BREZHNEV'S LONG-DISTANCE

APPROVAL, HE MAY HAVE HAD LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO
INFLUENCE THE VIEWS OF REST OF POLITBURO.

6. WHATEVER THE INGREDIENTS OF SOVIET DECISION, PUBLIC
TREATMENT OF CHILE EVENTS CONTINUES TO AVOID CHARGING
U.S. WITH FOSTERING COUP. DUBS UNQTE KISSINGER

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